The Seed Sower.

A Magazine for the Church, the School, and the Home.

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For the New Year.

Good day, new world! Like him of Genoa,
We, glad adventurers, kneel and kiss the strand
Of our emprise,—and cry, "Good day, new world, good day."
Onward, brave hearts, 'gainst odds would say us nay,
These hostile ills which lurk on every hand.
Make them and theirs to lead us into grand
Possession of ourselves and of the way.
O year! new year! world yet untried and strange!
For him who thus adventures, all good things
You hold in store; for he it is who brings
Hope to the front and courage; him no change
Speak harm or weaken, nor shall any chance
Rob him of his Divine inheritance.

C. A. Mason.

Steadfast.

Year after year we watch the wild flowers springing
Like smiles to Nature's rugged face;
Year after year we hear the robins singing,
Sure that each bird and bud will find its place.

O steadfast love of God that never alters,
Be thou our staff along the doubtful way.
O steadfast love of God that never falters,
Be thou the sun that lights our little day.

Why stay we on earth unless we grow?
Browning.

Associated Religion.

A SERMON

BY THE REV. STOPFORD A. BROOKE, M.A.

"Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:

"From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love."—EPHESIANS IV. 13, 16.

The existence of God is the root of all things, and I am not concerned to prove it. The attempts to prove it have made more atheists than the arguments of the atheists themselves. All argument for it supposes it problematical, and that which we are accustomed to look on as needing proof ends by appearing a matter of doubt. Those who deny Him have paralysed, or are paralysing, that which we call the soul. For the soul cannot be moved deeply, cannot stir itself on any subject, cannot love, or grieve, or live with beauty, or feel anything, without feeling God. He is, and we know Him when we love.

But, though we are not concerned to prove His Being, we are much concerned as to the right way to worship Him, and though the

common practice on the last Sunday of the year, of speaking to men of personal religion, of appealing to their individual feelings and character, and asking them to set themselves right with God, is good,—I prefer to lay before you a religion which does not exclude, but includes the personal worship of God, and to appeal to you as members of a great country and a great society to found within your hearts a true conception of an associated religion, such as you may all live with one another, "compacted by that which every joint supplieth, and making increase to the edifying of the body itself in love."

He worships God who feels his own life united to that of God, and experiences all that follows from so vital and close a relation. In doing so, he tends to become, and does become, individual. He is conscious of his growth in an actual and personal life, he feels his distinctness from others, he knows that both the type and its distinctness cannot do otherwise than continue, and in belief in eternal continuance of his own special being, his sense of individuality becomes day by day more vivid. It is this element of personal union with God which, profoundly felt by every religious man, has more than all else preserved human individuality against the tendencies in society, in politics, in science, and in theology to destroy it. On this personal worship of God and on this result of it I dwelt some time ago. A different truth of worship, and a balancing one to that, comes before us now. It is associated worship; the worship in which individuality is not lost, but modified; in which each person considers himself as in relation with God, because he is in undying relation with his fellow-men; in which God is not only looked on as my Father, but as our Father; in which the love of God is bound up with love to all our brother-men, who are our brothers, because He is our one Father.

Individual worship has, as I said, its possible evils. Unless it be balanced with associated worship, it tends at once to become selfish, and, in isolating a man with God, separates him from work in the world, or divides the world and its work from God, and in doing both these things makes fanatics, not Christians. Nor does it alone satisfy man, nor agree with the nature God has given him. For one of the first and finest desires of men, even in the savage state, is to form societies, to labour, and think, and pray together.

The individual tendency is thus wrong when it goes so far as to lessen or destroy the life in the principle of association. But, on the other hand, the associative tendency is also wrong when, in any of its forms, it goes so far as to lessen individuality, to merge, in any way, the individual in the race.

We want then, for the use and good of the world, an idea which shall keep both these tendencies, give each its full value, and yet preserve them from destroying one another. We want a spiritual conception which shall contain them both, and secure their balance, and to each of them perfect health.

It seems to me that the Christian theory of God and man does this. To secure individuality it says that there is one Divine Father of whom every living soul is child, with whom each of us is in personal relation, in whom each of us has a distinct life which is to continue and develop for ever into higher being. And this continuance and development is made sure, because each human life is in union with the infinite life and power and love of God. Supposing the idea to be true and to be fulfilled, can individuality be more strongly secured?

But, by the very relation of all men to God as sons, they are necessarily conceived of as associated by the tie of brotherhood, and bound by it *to love* one another, *to live* for another, *to form* one household, one society, one polity. Each remains different in individual character from every other, the powers, the desires of each are distinct; and this is necessary that all the different work and offices of the vast fraternity, and its social and political relations, may be duly wrought and filled; but in the midst of these differences and pervading them are certain consistent spiritual ideas and motives, which, being common to all men and moving all men, unite them in spite of their individual variety. These are: a common faith in One whom all believe to be perfect goodness and love; a common hope of eternal progress for all; a common end to which all work in their several ways. Still more strongly are they united into a society by a common love. Each man's Master and Brother is Christ, in whom God revealed His Fatherhood.

Each man loves Christ and His perfect life, and recognises it as the highest life. Each man aspires to one thing—to be made like to Christ; for to be made like to Him is to be made like to God. United by this common love of One, they are still more wrought into vital association by the spirit of His life, which is conceived of, and felt, as abiding in them. For that spirit encourages, stimulates, and insists on this as the first of duties, "Love one another as I have loved you."

Can we find higher grounds for association? Can we find securer grounds or more inspiring ones? And the best of them is that they leave individual development wholly untouched. They are not maxims, or laws, or opinions on which we are asked to agree; nothing temporary, nothing especially national—but large spiritual ideas bringing with them spiritual emotions, such as may be felt by the child, the youth, the man; by men in the childhood, youth, and manhood of the world; by all, at all times and in all places who possess our common human nature.

Human individuality, then, and human association are kept and combined in this theory. I am not guessing it, or working it out of my own mind. It is laid down vividly by St. Paul in one comparison after another. Those in whom it is realized he calls a temple in which all the stones are living—a body in which all the members have different offices—a household in which the brothers have different gifts—a polity in which all are fellow-citizens—and each "growing up into Him in all things, which is the head, even Christ, from whom the whole body, fitly joined together, and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body to the edifying of itself in love." This is the ideal, partly realized here on earth, to be fully realized hereafter in all the race. For there is one common end—the perfection of the human race in God in Christ. And *this* is it, this is the ideal hope of St. Paul, "Till we all come, in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to the perfect man—to the perfect humanity—unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."

This, then, I hold to be the true ground of human association—the communion of all men with one another in union with God—that is, *the ground of human association is religious.*

It is answered to this, that religion is a matter always between oneself alone and God; that it is always and only individual. I reply that man is one, that his human nature is at root the same in religion as in other matters; and that, if we are associated in every other form of love, able to recognise our union in a common fatherhood, in a common passion of love, in a common friendship, it is absurd to dissociate us and separate us into unconnected units in the matter of love to God. There is, on the contrary, nothing on which men may so universally unite as in belief in a Father and in the sentiment of love to Him. Religion is a matter between each of us and God; I do not deny, but assert it; but I fill up the truth with another. It is a matter between us all and God also—a matter in which we feel and ought to be conscious together of our brotherhood. The belief that we have a Father in Heaven of whom we are all children, and therefore brothers one of another, is the only ground of a universal human association. Suppose it were not, on what ground will you find enduring union? Will you find it in union for universal commercial interests—a union which breaks down whenever the self-interest of a nation or an individual becomes over-developed, and whose very theory, based on self-interest, encourages such over self-development? Will you find it in union for political ideas alone, for universal suffrage, for universal education, for personal liberty, for democracy, or monarchy? Without a religious spirit at their root, without a common faith in the nation that struggles for them, such unions only last as long as the interest of those who fight for them is promoted by them. Have we not learnt that by the experience of the last seventy years? Will you find it in the philosophic theory which bids us devote ourselves in altruistic life for the whole of the human race to come? We might—for that is no more than the Christian theory, however new its followers may think it—were it not that we are told that we ourselves, and the whole of those for whom we are to give up our lives, are to die for ever, and that there is no One Being in whom we are all contained. Can dying things unite; can there be any feeling of vital union between a present race that is perishing and a future race doomed to perish? Then, indeed, death can love death. What centre of union is there, if there be

no God? What centre of union, in the last thought, has this theory, but the nothingness to which we are all hurrying? And do you expect, or dream, in the wildest revel of theory, that human-kind will associate themselves for worship on that ground?

We live to think, we live to act; we unite with one another in thought and in action; and in the Christian theory of human life our united thought and action finds its source, its centre and its goal, in God, and in the eternity of human thought and action in Him. But in the philosophic theory just mentioned we unite in thought the end of which will be the extinction of all thought; and in action the end of which will be everlasting inaction; and in behalf of a race every member of which ceases after a few years to think and act or to be capable of union with another. The common sense of the human heart will never accept as the ground of a binding union a religion in which death plays the part of life, and nothingness the part of God. We are told that we may associate together on the greatest happiness principle—the Utilitarian theory. As expounded by Mill, it says, so far as it goes, exactly that which Christianity says; and if you add to it the Christian motives and sanctions—belief in a God who wishes our best happiness and that of all—and belief in the continuance and growth of that happiness in an eternal life—and that what we do here, and unite to do, bears fruit for ever in our own happiness and that of the whole—it is a very workable theory and it is possible to unite in it as one intellectual form of the Christian theory; but if you take God out of it and immortal life, neither its motive nor its sanctions are sufficiently strong to create in the mass of men a noble individual life, nor to induce them to live for one another in a vital union. Interest in one's own happiness, which is one part of the theory, will be far too strong to enable us to realize the other part of the theory, that our happiness is greatest when we act for the happiness of the whole. Nay, even if we add to the Utilitarian theory the ideas of God and immortality, it still remains unworkable as a binding power of human association. To use a rude metaphor, it puts the cart before the horse. It sets out individual happiness first, and the happiness of the whole, second, as the motive of life; and the first does not draw, and it prevents the second from using its drawing power. You may lash the cart for ever, it will not move forward.

Again, we are told that we may unite on the ground of uniformity of religious opinion and practice—in a Church. But, whenever such uniformity is insisted on as absolutely necessary, the individuality of man refuses to limit itself, and breaks into opposition. The insistence on uniformity prevents unity; and Churches that conceive of religion as belief in certain stereotyped doctrines, and not as a spirit or a life which creates in every man its own form, do not encourage, but stand in the way of universal association. They naturally deny a universal Father and a universal Brotherhood. Those only are sons of God who belong to their special fold! Those only are brothers who are united in their scheme of opinions! So far as any particular Church dwells on this, or claims itself as the sole repository of the truth, it denies the universal Church of Christ and of St. Paul. And in doing this it is far more guilty and injurious to the human race than anything else in the world; because it makes religion—which is, and which Christ proclaimed to be, the only true ground of human union—the ground of human disunion. Hence the disunion which has been made in the name of religion; its wars and bitter divisions have been worse than those caused by any other thing in the world. Churches are curses so far as they divide men; but they would be useful, and are useful, when they say, —"Our several organizations are for different types of mind, and to unite these different types together; but each of us, however we may differ in doctrine and practice, feel ourselves at one with all the others, in certain great conceptions which form the One Spirit by which we all live, and move, and have our being; nay, we feel at one with all those who stand outside of our unions, because they also are, as we are, sons of God. We organize ourselves for temporary purposes; for greater practical effect; for greater intellectual clearness of thought on spiritual subjects; for the sake of a more vivid spiritual sympathy than can be gained by isolated congregations; but far above our temporary union rises the eternal union of all men in the universal society of all the world in God; far beyond the schemes of doctrine on

which we agree or disagree rises the one spiritual love of God that all men may possess, and possessing, feel their undying union; and far beyond the outward ritual on which we meet is the ritual that flows from this love, and is a holy life."

On these grounds, then, as it seems to me, there is no universal association of the human race possible, nay, fairly conceivable. We come back, then, to the original Christian theory. Mankind can only be truly united and feel its union on the ground of a common belief in a universal Father, of faith in the eternal progress of all in union with Him, of a common effort after one good—the perfection of each and all in Him. These are the true binding, associating thoughts, and not those we have been looking at. Brotherhood in God—the Thought and Love who never ceases action, and who loves each one of us for ourselves, and yet in and for the whole—is very different from brotherhood in nothingness, in chance, in fate! Brotherhood in doing the will of a Father who is absolute goodness, whose will is the centre of right, is very different from brotherhood in human ideas of duty, which change and shift from age to age. Brotherhood in immortality is very different from brotherhood in death; brotherhood in sharing in the infinite life of an infinite spirit, in possessing, and naturally possessing one infinite power of love—in sharing in the one all-moving intellect, in the one all-creating imagination—is very different from brotherhood in atoms and their movement; brotherhood in Divinity, which has taken all the race into Himself, and will make it all good and all immortal, is very different from brotherhood in a humanity that calls itself the "Great Being," and yet drops at every instant one of its leaves into the abyss of utter death, and has nothing to say to the evil, the lost, and the miserable, but that they can't be helped; which asserts the progress of the race, but denies the progress of all the persons who compose it.

Out of the one kind of brotherhood comes association, progress, future and perfect unity; out of the other division and death, and the uniformity of annihilation. When, at the last, all the creative and passionate aspiring souls of men, and all their thought and love shall have returned to the dead silence of thoughtless atomic movement, there will be uniformity enough; but you will scarcely call it unity, you will scarcely, without scorn, give that the name of progress. Which shall be your goal, your hope, your faith? this—until we all come in the unity of the faith and the power of the Son of God unto the perfect humanity? or this—until we all come in the unity of death and the power of a force that dissolves all it builds into the perfect atomic dispersion of all we call Humanity? No, we abide in the great truths—our universal brotherhood in God our Father; our eternal, continuous progress in Him. From these all the great and common duties of man—individual duties towards God, associated duties towards one another, most justly and naturally flow. The doing of these duties by us all, and altogether as one man, is the true associated worship of God; and this worship we give to God, not in our personal relation to Him, but in our relation to Him as brothers one of another.

Lastly, this associated worship of mankind. What is it? 1. It is conceiving of mankind as for ever one in God, and governed by one law—the will of God for its final perfection; it is to believe in progress towards that goal, and never to cease working for it; it is to realize such progress in ourselves, that we may be able to realize it for others; it is to believe in our higher destiny and to educate ourselves for it, that we may be able to believe in it for others and to educate them for it; it is never to forget this, and, therefore, never to despair of any man, however lost; of any race, however degraded.

2. It is in conceiving of mankind as one living body and ourselves as vital members of it, to feel that we are bound, by the love such a union should kindle in us as well as by the law which binds the whole, so to live and work as to give the utmost strength and development, not to our own particular self, but to the whole body, so that the life of the whole may become richer, stronger, more active, more harmonious.

3. It is not to do away with the ideas of family, and society, and country in which we naturally associate ourselves, but to hold them within and in subordination to a greater conception—that of all mankind existing in God, and advancing into higher and higher life in Him; to associate ourselves on this ground, and to so

act and think that all we do may bear on the advance of the whole; asking ourselves always, before every act, and speech, and work—Is what I am going to do good for mankind to do? is it good for mankind to receive? and, if we cannot answer yes to that, not to do it, though it may seem good for our family, or our society, or our country to do it. That will be worship of God.

4. It is, finally, to think out, and, once found, to make entirely our own, and the ground of all act and thought, the great ideas which are the moving powers of mankind, the sails which, filled with the wind of God, drive onward over the ocean the ship of the human race to the harbour of unity and perfection; to devote our life to fulfil those ideas and to love them above all things, and as the will and thought of God for man.

That will be our worship of God as one of a great human communion.

This is the worship which I recommend to you in the coming year, and into which you will grow and develop when once you learn that you have entered upon a path to which there is no end. It is this worship which, as members of a vast and united family, we are to give to God, and in so giving it to Him we give the deepest love and honour to one another. It does not exclude individual worship—it reacts on it and exalts it; frees it from selfishness, gives it freedom, joy, great thoughts, and vital power. It makes it more praise than prayer.

A Plea for the Book of Common Prayer.

By the Rev. Edgar I. Fripp, B.A.

IV.

In addition to the appointed hymns, of which I spoke in my last paper, the Prayer Book contains an invaluable monthly arrangement of the Psalter for daily reading or singing. The "Psalms for the Day" are an established feature of Anglican worship. It is a pity that Nonconformity has not preserved them. Why should not the Psalter, as thus arranged, be revised, by the omission of the imprecatory and some other psalms, and the substitution for them of other lyrical passages of Scripture? We use such a revision in our services at All Souls', Belfast, which is as near as possible to the original, but includes, for psalms omitted, passages from Proverbs, Job, Isaiah, Lamentations, Wisdom, Ecclesiasticus, the Gospels, St. Paul's Epistles, and the Book of Revelation. Not only does this introduce range and variety into our services, but it provides a book for private devotion. I have rejoiced to hear sick and infirm people say that they have been reading it at home.

I now pass to the Lessons.

In the old English Catholic Church a number of lessons, as many as nine sometimes, were read at service. They were very short and carefully selected, occasionally not from the Bible nor the Apocrypha, and were in Latin. The Protestant Reformers objected to the selection and to the foreign tongue: and they accordingly arranged a table of lessons by which nearly the *whole* Bible, and nothing but the Bible, might be read, at least once in the course of the year, in *English*. The Old Testament and parts of the Apocrypha were read for a first lesson, and the New Testament for a second. Thus the "Word of God" was made known to the people and ceased to be the exclusive property of the priests or the educated classes. And in order that the poorest in the remotest parts of the church might hear the precious Word of Life, the "ministre" was instructed to read "standing, and turning hym so as he maye beste be hearde of all suche as be present."

Since then our ideas about the limits of God's Word have considerably changed. We no longer regard the Bible as the *only* source, or as the *official* source, of God's Truth. The Divine Word is too great to be confined to any or all Scriptures. It is to be found in Nature, in the Soul, in the history of human life, in the laws of progress, in the ideal and the beautiful everywhere. And we believe that *that* only in the Bible itself is God's Truth which is reasonable, or holy, or beautiful.

Yet we cannot do better, I think, than keep to the old Protestant practice of a "chapter" from the Bible. Matthew Arnold says: "As long as the world lasts all who want to make progress in righteousness will come to Israel for inspiration, as to the people who have had the sense for righteousness most glowing and strongest;

and in hearing and reading the words Israel has uttered for us, carers for conduct will find a glow and a force they could find nowhere else. As well imagine a man with a sense for sculpture not cultivating it by the help of the remains of Greek art, or a man with a sense for poetry not cultivating it by the help of Homer and Shakespeare, as a man with a sense for conduct not cultivating it by the help of the Bible. And this sense is the sense which has to do with three-fourths of human life."

A great deal may be said in favour of the inclusion in our lessons of noble utterances from other sources, as in the old Catholic days. Some ministers do so *on principle*, that is, to show that their general usage of the Bible is by *choice* and not by *compulsion*. But these ministers, I think, must feel that usually they could have selected something much more appropriate for the occasion from the Bible. And if some noble passage from a non-biblical writer is running in our minds, we can probably find room for it in the sermon. A yet stronger reason for selecting the lessons from the Bible is the lamentable ignorance of it in many congregations. It is not too much, perhaps, to say that the Bible is dreadfully neglected, whether as literature or for purposes of devotion, by a great mass of the population. And instead of letting the Sunday opportunities for Bible-reading go, ministers should be eager to avail themselves of them. Ministers, too, I think, might read *more* of the Bible, especially of the Old Testament. It might be thought in some churches that there was little worth reading in the Old Testament except the Psalter and the Book of Isaiah!

It seems to me, then, that our need is rather for a Reformed than an Extended Lectionary, with Lessons for the day and for the Christian seasons; but as an outline of what I would propose would be too great a digression here, I will reserve it for a special article in the *Seed Sower*.

Before, however, I leave the subject of "Lessons," may I put in a word for the old Authorised Version?

I am not ashamed to say that I very greatly prefer it for devotional purposes to the Revised Version. There was a time when the Anglican religion was thought to rest on the words of Scripture only, and consequently ministers and people were very anxious to get the *ipsissima verba* or their exact equivalents. Doctrinal discussions were almost entirely discussions about the meaning of texts; and Unitarians were eager to have a revised translation in order to refute their opponents.

But now the point of view is different. It matters less whether or not our particular opinions are those in Scripture. We are more concerned to know whether they are *true in themselves*. And we go to the Bible more for the good of our hearts and souls than to prove our theological position. The question is: "Which of the versions is the more helpful—the more beautiful and loveable and sacred to us as Englishmen and worshippers?" To ask the question, I think, is to answer it. The new book may be nearer to the Hebrew and the Greek; but *the old English book is, as a rule, better than the Hebrew and the Greek*. The Scriptures have gained in passing through the Teutonic medium; and nowhere have they gained so much as in the deep, reverent nature of the English race. In taking an English form, from the days of Bede to Wyclif and from Wyclif to Shakespeare, the Bible has acquired a peculiar national beauty which makes it precious to us as no literal translation can ever be. For example, the Book of Psalms, in the shape it assumed in the most poetic period of English history, in the version of 1611, is finer as literature, deeper in its religious spirit, and has a nobler music in it, than the Hebrew Psalter; and to give up this sacred heirloom, in order to understand a little more accurately the meaning of the original writers, may be in the interest of scholarship and theological controversy, but it is not in the interest of piety. And what we want to be is not so much scholars and correct interpreters, as godly men with a faith of our own.

I now come to the Creed—the so-called "Apostles' Creed"—appointed to be said at morning and evening service.

There is a pleasant old story that the Apostles compiled the Creed, each contributing a clause in turn, before they parted at Jerusalem. But this is a legend. The Creed, though the shortest and oldest of the orthodox confessions of faith, is certainly not Apostolic. It is older than the Christian doctrine of the Trinity, which does not

appear in it; but it is itself a development of a simpler rule of faith employed in the early Church at the baptism of converts. The most ancient confession of Christian faith is probably that contained in some MSS. of Acts viii., 37, where Philip says, at baptism: "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God," which means, "I believe in Jesus as the true Messiah." About the middle of the second century, perhaps, the baptised may have confessed belief in "the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost"—a development of an expression of St. Paul (2 Cor., xiii, 14). This gradually grew until the orthodox Christian was required to believe in God the Father; in Jesus Christ the Son, who had been miraculously born, had suffered, died, and risen again, and ascended into Heaven, whence he would come to judge the living and the dead; and in the Holy Ghost. The addition of further particulars, such as God the "Maker of Heaven and earth," and Jesus Christ "the only Son," the "Holy Catholic Church," &c., at last resulted in the "Apostles' Creed."

The process did not stop there. The advance of speculative theology, and the attempt to solve the problems of evil and sin and pardon, led to a later and Trinitarian form of the "Apostles' Creed," known as the "Nicene Creed," from its sanction at Nicaea in the year A.D. 325. In a yet further developed form it was accepted at Constantinople in the year A.D. 381.

Now the story of the growth of this Creed is immensely interesting. It is, to a large extent, the story of Christian *thought* during the first four centuries, and shows how every generation brought its particular problem and tried to solve it. It is an illustration of the truth that Christian thought is never final, that it never stands still, but is progressive, like every other form of thought. Here we see how the Christian Creed was modified again and again during four hundred years; and here also we have a demonstration of the danger of fixed authoritative beliefs.

The "Apostles' Creed" may have satisfied most Christians in the year 250; but it was not satisfactory in the year 325; still less was it so in the year 381. What then of the present day?

To say the least, it is out of harmony with modern thought. Non-Trinitarian as it is, and satisfactory as it must have been to a Unitarian like Priestley, it must be very far from satisfactory to many members in our Free Churches. Personally, I look upon that expression "*only* Son of God," as applied to Jesus, as a denial of the Gospel that God is *our* Father; and I think that no expression would be more abhorrent to Jesus himself. It immediately makes an impassable gulf between us and Him, and between us and God, which would be to Him most dreadful. Also untrue to me are the beliefs that Jesus was born of a virgin, that he descended into Hell or Hades, that he will return to judge the world, and that there will be a resurrection of the body.

But, at the same time, the Creed contains some grand things. I like to put together the words in it I sincerely believe, and repeat them sometimes to myself in moments of doubt and gloom. It is often a help to me to say:

"I believe in God the Father. And in Jesus Christ. I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Holy Catholic Church, the Communion of Saints, the Forgiveness of Sins, and the Life Everlasting."

There is a pair of phrases, also, in the "Nicene Creed" which again and again I repeat most thankfully, which seems to me to go to the very root of the Christian religion—"*begotten, not made, of one substance with the Father.*" But these thoughts, deep and true and helpful as they may be to me, may not be so to other Christians. Their faith may take very different forms, and yet be far more real and vital than mine. Nay, sometimes I myself want to speak differently, to use words of my own and not the words of anybody else. I positively revolt sometimes from anything like an emasculated Creed of other minds and ages; while at others I crave to know that I believe as others did and as others do. Let each man, then, have his own carefully and strenuously and prayerfully thought-out belief, and say it to himself in any words he may for the moment choose, and let him seek earnestly to get others to believe as he does, and derive its benefits; but never let him *impose* it upon another as a condition of religious fellowship.

Theology, however important it is, is not religion. Theology is continually being modified; it changes in our own thought. But the spirit of worship is in essence everywhere and in all souls the same. While Creeds alter, while they

come and go, reverence is the same, faith is the same, hope is the same, love is the same, the desire for the Perfect is the same; and these things are religion. I cannot define religion; but I know what it is. It is the sense that life is a very beautiful and sacred thing. It is the faith that the universe is built on magnificent principles. It is hatred of sin. It is hunger and thirst after goodness. It is hopefulness for ourselves and for all men. It is belief in *the possible* everywhere. It is steady, daily progress toward Christ. It is a drawing closer to our fellow-men and to all our fellow creatures. It is a deepening of our pity and of our friendships. It is a widening of the spirit of brotherhood. It is a yearning for something beyond the veil of visible things. It is belief in an immortal destiny. This is religion; and it is more than theology as the soul is more than the body.

On Altering Hymns.

Nearly every new hymn book that is issued provokes strong criticism, on the ground that the original text of many of the hymns has been tampered with. A living writer, who has written some of the best hymns in the English language, recently insisted, in a letter to a friend, that no man could possibly alter another man's hymns so as to "improve" them. The following letter is part of the reply to this theory. It may interest some people who are neither hymn writers nor editors of hymn books:—

"You maintain that no man can improve the compositions of another 'when they are living writers—at once the utterance of his inmost soul and the elaborate work of his intellect, the combined result of his spiritual and critical powers;' and therefore you argue that 'all editors of hymn books . . . are in the wrong;' for I do not know of a single hymn book in which all the hymns appear as they were written.

"I demur to the soundness of your principle, and if it be sound, I demur to its application.

"Language is a very difficult instrument to master, and I believe that no man can be said to be master either of his native tongue or of any other.

"Many men, of inferior power and knowledge, may recognise, even in great authors—poets as well as prose writers—inaccuracies which are flaws in the perfection of their work; inaccuracies which are indisputably the result of imperfect acquaintance with the idiom of the language.

"Again, accidental associations with a word sometimes invest it with a glory to one man which it cannot have to anyone else in the world; and it seems to me, a perversity to say that because it has somehow become touched with a grace and a splendour for himself which no one else recognises, and which no one else can ever recognise, therefore the word is the truest expression of his thought. It does not express the thought at all; and another man may see where the failure lies, and by a slight change may secure for the thought the voice and music which it had never had before. Can you not imagine, to take an extreme case, that a word which a father has heard from the lips of a child he has lost, may have for him a beauty and tenderness which no one besides may see in it? The father might say that for his own sake, for the sake of the associations connected with it, he wants that word to stand in his most finished and perfect piece of work; but if this is the ground on which he keeps it there, his position is intelligible. But if he says, 'The word is the exactest expression of my thought,' the reply is obvious. To you it may be indissolubly associated with the thought, but to others it is bare of everything that invests it with significance and power. I need not apply my illustration.

"But if your principle were sound, I should contest its pertinence.

"A hymn is to be the expression of what a congregation feels, or, if you like, of what it ought to feel. It may well happen that you may utter your thought in the most admirable manner in which it can be uttered, and that when I am asked to utter it, I may say and say with justice, 'I can't utter it just so.' We must speak as well as hear in our own tongue the wonderful works of God. One man may be able to express his very deepest thought of God's tenderness, in the old Hebrew way, and may sing, 'His bowels melt with love;' but the Hebrew way is not mine. It may be just as good as the English way—it may be better; but to me it is an impossible way. I can speak of God's heart—though in the nature of things there is no more reason why I should speak of God's heart than of his bowels; and the time may come, or perhaps in other countries the time has come already, when His 'heart' may be as offensive to many people as 'bowels' are to me. However this may be, I can speak of the one, not of the other. Now I feel that it would be simply—well, I don't want to use a hard word, and so I will say—irrational, not to change 'bowels' into something else, if it occurred in a hymn which, on the whole, is a noble expression of reverence, and love, and trust. What I mean is, that the best in itself may be the impossible to ninety-nine men out of a hundred. When a poet writes a hymn, he writes something for other people to sing as well as himself. He must write German for the Germans, Arabic for Arabs, and the kind of English possible to ordinary English people, if he writes for them. When, by any accident, there is a word or phrase in his hymns which, to ordinary English people, is as unnatural or unintelligible as Chinese to an Irishman, I think that a man who could no more write a hymn than he could fly, may mend it.

"I can manage to translate an ode of Horace, though I could never have written one. And, by the way, your principle would, as it seems to me, forbid translations altogether, and require us to sing David's psalms in Hebrew."

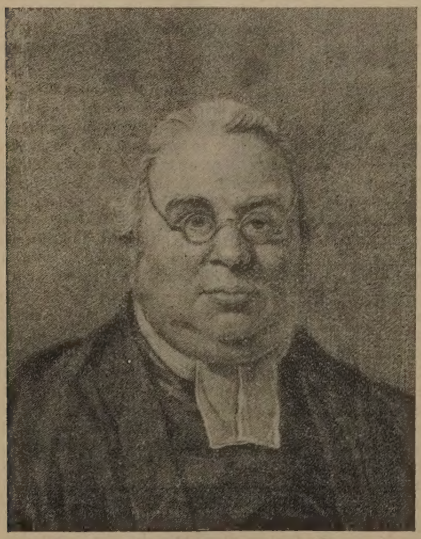
Authentic Interviews.

VI.—THOMAS BELSHAM.

London, 1825.

Mr. James Boswell in his "Life of Dr. Johnson" quotes a passage from the "Essays" of the Rev. Thomas Belsham. But he adds a pious comment to this effect:—

"Mr. Belsham discovers in his "Essays" so much reading and thinking, and good composition, that I regret his not having been fortunate enough to be educated a member of our excellent national establishment. Had he



not been nursed in Nonconformity, he probably would not have been tainted with those heresies (as I sincerely, and on no slight investigation, think them) both in religion and politics, which, while I read, I am sure with candour, I cannot read without offence."

To be nursed in Nonconformity, and tainted with heresy, is a misfortune which has often been the salvation of religion; but it involves the Nonconformist in disability, and the heretic in controversy, even in this tolerant day.

The Rev. Thomas Belsham has taken his full share, perhaps more, in defending the faith he holds dear, and defeating the wiles of error. Up to the present time about fifty publications have flown from his pen, and borne his name. His theology has been of a militant type, keen in defence and quick in attack. Of the Unitarian doctrine, none has been a more doughty champion, whether against Arian within the gate, or Trinitarian without. Rebukes of prelates in high places, as the Bishops of London and St. David's; replies to hapless critics, as Dr. Moysey and Dean Magee; recent articles in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, which have proved too much for Mr. Sylvanus Urban; pamphlets too numerous to mention; all these have borne ceaseless witness to his vigilant outspokenness.

There is, however, another and gentler side to Mr. Belsham's labours. As the successor of Mr. Lindsey and Dr. Disney at Essex Chapel in the Strand, he has ministered in the Metropolis for the last twenty years to a distinguished body of hearers, and upon peaceful Christian matters. Having now reached the advanced age of seventy-five, he is, indeed, more than entitled to an honourable semi-retirement, and the help of an assistant. Such assistance, we learn, has been engaged in the person of the Rev. Thomas Madge, minister for the past fourteen years of the Octagon Chapel, Norwich. Mr. Belsham has vacated Essex House and moved to Hampstead, where we were privileged to receive most courteous replies to our, perhaps, too inquisitive questions.

"Did your desire to be a minister go back to any special event or date?"

"On Saturday, the 28th of February, 1767, after much deliberation and many doubts and fears, I at length, by God's assistance, determined that 'whatever others did, I would serve the Lord.'"

"And how did your determination take definite form?"

"I set apart the morning hours before breakfast for a most serious and solemn dedication of myself to the ministerial office. I meditated on the form of dedication, which after I had done some time, I knelt down and read it solemnly through. I afterwards wrote it out, and solemnly signed and sealed it."

"You would then be at the Daventry Academy?"

"I went to Daventry in August, 1766, and remained there as a student till 1771. Under Dr. Ashworth I studied divinity and philosophy, and paid such attention to my lectures as to obtain the approbation of my tutor."

"And in time became a tutor yourself?"

"In August, 1770, I took the Greek class, and in August, 1771, I was appointed tutor in mathematics, logic, and metaphysics. I loved the pupils, and was beloved by them." Mr. Belsham on leaving was presented with a handsome present of plate, and was succeeded by the Rev. Timothy Kenrick.

"Where was your first settlement as minister?"

"At Worcester. Here I passed three very pleasant years. I saw something of the world and was introduced into company; but I almost forgot my studies, and became very idle, reading little." The congregation met in the Independent Chapel, Angel Street.

After declining invitations to Ware, Carter Lane (London), and Walthamstow, Mr. Belsham was ultimately re-called to Daventry as minister and Divinity tutor.

"Were you happy at Daventry during your second stay?"

"This period I call the beginning of the manhood of my existence. Before this 'I thought as a child, I understood as a child.' I met with some trouble from the conduct of some of the young men, but upon the whole I was very happy with them, and the institution flourished beyond all former precedent. At one time there were fifty students."

Mr. Belsham was twice pressed while at Daventry to become tutor of Divinity in the Warrington Academy, which, though closed, was not yet dissolved. He did not, however, fall in with the scheme, and the institution died of untimely decline.

"The Warrington project deserved a better fate."

"I know not how to think without poignant regret on the desecration of those buildings, so long the seat of learning and the muses, and which the venerable names of Taylor and Aikin will render dear to every friend of science and virtue as long as the Dissenting interest shall last."

"Dr. Aikin, you have said before, was your first schoolmaster. What was your opinion of Dr. Taylor?"

"Dr. Taylor thought freely in his day. He thought much himself, and he taught others to think; and though he did not advance so far as others have done since, yet the most enlightened of modern divines would probably not have known so much, nor have understood the Scriptures so well, if Dr. Taylor had not gone before them to clear the road."

"It was while at Daventry, was it not, that you became a Unitarian convert?"

"I studied 'Socinianism' much, and endeavoured to divest myself of all prejudice. I believe few persons inquired with a more anxious concern than myself into the Trinitarian controversy; and I could not but consider the unity of God to be a doctrine of such high importance that it ought, upon all proper occasions, to be asserted in the most explicit manner, whether men will hear, or whether they will forbear."

"And for this reason you sent in your resignation?"

"Having become a Unitarian, I thought it my duty to resign the Academy. The true cause of my resignation was that, by becoming a Unitarian, I incapacitated myself from answering the end for which the institution was established, and for which I was chosen to preside in it."

"After a twenty years' connection you must have felt the parting?"

"It was no pleasant, no easy thing to resign sentiments, connections, and friends whom long habit had endeared; but what could be done? I had no spiritual knight errantry in my constitution."

"You next accepted proposals, made by Dr. Price, to become resident tutor in New College, Hackney?"

"If I had not been very much pressed by Mr. Lindsey and Dr. Priestley, who thought that my settlement might be subservient to the interests of truth and free inquiry, I should have declined accepting the proposals."

"How long did you remain?"

"I resigned Daventry Academy and congregation in August, 1789, and my only wish and expectation was to live in a small house in

Birmingham, in the neighbourhood of Dr. Priestley. I was drawn involuntarily to take a department in the New College, and I remained there, year after year, expecting each to be the last." It was closed in 1796.

"What happened to you next?"

"I was applied to from Manchester Academy to succeed Dr. Barnes. I deliberated upon the proposal, and with some reluctance rejected it, because I was not satisfied with the permanence of the institution."

"Although attached so much to your tutorship duties, you were, doubtless, glad to succeed Dr. Priestley at the Gravel Pit Chapel, Hackney?"

"I thought myself altogether cut off from public services, and on a sudden found myself called to one of the most conspicuous situations among the Protestant Dissenters. I could not but remark the different state of this congregation. In the year 1791, this Society would not choose me as assistant to Dr. Priestley: in 1802, I was elected sole minister."

"You had become intimate with Dr. Priestley, and also with Mr. Lindsey?"

"When I resigned my situation at Daventry, I secretly wished, but little expected, to obtain the friendship of these two excellent men. It pleased God to grant my request. Both these eminent servants of God, and confessors of truth, took me to their hearts."

"And having been Priestley's successor at Hackney it was not unfitting that you should then in turn also succeed Lindsey, after Dr. Disney?"

"I believe that every possible enquiry was made after some seceding clergyman who would be likely to suit the Essex Street Congregation, but to no purpose. On Sunday, May 5, 1805, I preached my farewell sermon at Hackney. From this time I commenced morning preacher at Essex Street. For the months of August and September the Chapel was shut up to be repaired. The first Sunday in October it was opened again with the new edition of Mr. Lindsey's Liturgy. I then commenced preaching morning and afternoon."

"Can you recall your first hearing of Mr. Lindsey?"

"In January, 1779, being upon a visit to London, I was taken by a friend to attend the evening service in Mr. Lindsey's Chapel. The subject of the discourse was a good conscience; and the seriousness and gravity with which it was treated confirmed me in the opinion that it was *possible* for a Socinian to be a good man! At the same time I felt a very sincere concern that persons so highly respectable as Mr. Lindsey should entertain opinions so grossly erroneous, as I then conceived, and so disparaging to the doctrines of the Gospel. Little did I then suspect that further and more diligent and impartial inquiry would induce me to embrace a system from which my mind at that time shrank with horror. And had it been foretold to me that in the course of years, and the revolution of events, I should myself become the disciple, the friend, the successor, and the biographer of the person who was then speaking; that it should fall to my lot from that very pulpit to pronounce before a crowded assembly of weeping mourners the funeral oration of Theophilus Lindsey, I should have regarded it as an event almost without the wide circle of possibilities, and as incredible as the incidents of an Arabian tale."

"One other question. It has been remarked, Mr. Belsham, that, though yourself so strong a Unitarian, you yet merely put 'Essex Street Chapel' on your building, and opposed the Unitarian Fund; further, that you declined to attend a meeting for the formation of a new Society, to protect Unitarians from Civil disabilities. Was this the case?"

"I did not attend because I have found it necessary to retire from all public meetings, but chiefly because I demur to the prudence and propriety of the Unitarians separating themselves from the rest of the Nonconformists, and establishing themselves as a distinct sect. This sectarian spirit, however it may tend to strengthen a party, appears to me to be unfriendly to the spirit of religion and the investigation of truth. Every sect must have its shibboleth."

"You imply then that, while personally holding and advocating Unitarian doctrine, you yet decline to make it the basis of religious association, or to embody it in any permanent institution?"

"I am not serving a party," was Mr. Belsham's reply. "My sole ambition is to promote the knowledge of Christ and his

genuine Gospel. But my labours are nearly over."

"Not without having greatly advanced the Cause of Truth and Progress."

"The good cause is in good hands; it will go on and triumph. Lindsey, and Jebb, and Priestley are no more; but the leaven which they have infused is working its way. The spark which they kindled has produced a flame which cannot be extinguished."

Written on Nearing Rome.

Rome, thou hast haunted me in many a dream!
I scarce believe thou dost confront me now:
Queen of all cities, with the castled brow
Reclining ever by thy turbid stream—
It is thyself! Thou dost not only seem!
Thine the dim majesty, the suffering guise,
The patient proud disdain in dauntless eyes.
Thy glory, which no future can redeem,
Makes the long sunset of the centuries,
Kindling a mellower lustre in their skies,
Till gradual twilight closes o'er the scene,
As it doth now, and the pale stars arise.
Thou liest death-like 'neath night's spangled screen:
Deathless! immortal! Of all cities Queen!

—*E. C. P.*

The Seed Sower;

A MONTHLY MAGAZINE,

FOR THE HOME, THE SCHOOL, AND THE CHURCH.

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BIRMINGHAM.

Manchester College (Oxford) Letter.

The long vacation, with its incessant racing up and down the country to supply pulpits being at an end, we came down to Oxford for necessary physical rest and mental activity. But the first few days at Manchester College were anything but peaceful. All was bustle and stir within, for the most important ceremony since the opening of the college had to be performed, the unveiling of the Martineau statue, executed by Mr. Hope Pinker. This massive work of art, which took three days to hoist up the steps, looks straight down the library and faces Mr. G. F. Watts' portrait of the great teacher. By the statue we are reminded of the spiritual temper of our leader more than we have been by the representation of the painter. Of course, all readers of this letter will know that the statue was presented to the college by Mr. C. Jones, who acted as treasurer to the many subscribers who were anxious to place on record, in a permanent form, their unbounded esteem, and they will also remember the admirable tributes paid to the great master by Dr. Drummond and the Master of Balliol. We were delighted to see many Oxford scholars of the most diverse and opposed opinions present, to pay their respect to a man who has so powerfully influenced the life and thought of the learned men, and consequently of all other men, of this century.

There could be no more appropriate place for the window, presented by Mr. Darbishire, than the library. We have, for the benefit of visitors, learnt off the names of the figures in the windows presented by the Warrington Church, but the conception of Mr. Darbishire's window is more subtle. Although there is not much difficulty in saying what the figures are, and although, as the weeks of the term have gone by, they have constantly suggested new thoughts, we are afraid we shall have to take furtive glances at Mr. Darbishire's explanation when showing visitors, if we wish to acquit ourselves with credit as guides. When our visitors come in crowds we hope the days will not be dull, for, if they are, they may miss the grand impression which this window is intended to convey, and does convey, on bright days. Gradually, through the liberality of those who are interested in the spread of pure religion, posterity is being robbed of the privilege of embellishing our college, but we can see a few places, though very few, which can be mproved. Everyone is charmed who enters the building. We are naturally proud of it, and hope that all directly or indirectly connected will endeavour to visit it.

Our enthusiasm over these new additions has caused us to restrain our lamentations over the departed students, on whom, owing to the decease of *Poz*, no epitaphs have been written. Only two years have elapsed since the present writer's entrance into the college, but not one of those who then greeted him is in the college now. Oh, the quips and cranks and follies of these men! Oh, the weight of the tradition! Mr. Wicksteed, our late senior, has settled at Padiham; Mr. Thomas, whose lively and racy letters readers of the *Seed Sower* will remember, at Liscard; Mr. Shaw, at New Church; Mr. Homer, at West Bromwich—all, we are glad to say, in places where good and hard work can be done. Mr. Löfi, whose health gave way during the Midsummer term, is well again,

and has taken a church at Nagy-Ajta. He writes to us amusing accounts of his farm life, for most Hungarian ministers are farmers. Since his church pays his salary in kind, we hope his congregation will not endeavour to settle disputes by condemning him to the diet of potatoes. We understand that he has forsaken Pentateuch criticism for a time, and is studying a treatise on the nature and growth of cabbages. We also bade farewell to Mr. Sen, who seems disinclined to leave us. Whether he remains in England long or returns for the annual ceremonies of the Brahmo Somaj in January, we shall always have a pleasant remembrance of his striking figure and distinct and charming personality.

We welcomed Messrs. Andreae, B.A. (Lincoln Coll.), E. G. Evans, B.A. (Jesus Coll.), Buckland (Caius Coll., Cant.), Emms (Hackney Coll.), Stewart (late of Presbyterian ministry), C. Travers (minister at Carlisle), M. Simonfi (of Hungary), B. C. Pal (of Calcutta), and H. C. Sarkar, M.A. (of Calcutta). The remarkable adaptability of the last three gentlemen to their environment has convinced the waverers among us of the truth of Darwinism. Our two Hindoo friends appeared one morning with faces beaming with delight. On enquiring the reason, we learned they had had a new sensation: they had seen snow for the first time. Mr. Simonfi, we are informed, knows the English language better than any of his predecessors on their arrival. We are glad that Mr. Emms, who is the Congregational minister at Cricklade, feels quite at home among us. The rest of the new men will some day speak for themselves. We are now twelve in number with an average age of over 28 years; so we are a small and old lot. As external students we also welcome Mr. J. Islam Jones, who has gone to Jesus Coll., and Mr. C. M. Wright, the son of Rev J. J. Wright, who has gone to Lincoln Coll.

The death-knell of intolerance has been tolled. Ministers may learn from students. The students of Mansfield and Manchester Colleges have acknowledged that their agreements are real and fundamental, and their differences transient and unimportant. On Friday, November 11th, we had the pleasure of the Mansfield students' company—twenty-two in number—at dinner, and afterwards we adjourned to the Junior Common Room, where we spent two hours in singing and good fellowship. This gathering has had good results. Friendships have been formed. Manchester men can now be seen smoking Mansfield cigarettes, and Mansfield men lolling in Manchester arm-chairs. Mr. R. Evans, B.A., the senior of Mansfield, in a speech replying to the welcome, stated that he thought the meeting ought to have taken place long ago, and that Mansfield had some years before sent an invitation to Manchester to meet them in the field, which, needless to say, had to be refused. We most heartily re-echo words which we saw when peeping into the Mansfield College Magazine. "We spent an evening, which will long be remembered as one of the happiest of our Oxford experiences." So like old friends did we seem, that we concluded with singing "Auld Lang Syne," the accompaniments being played by Messrs. Kerry and Philips, the organists of the two colleges.

On Friday, November 28th, we visited the Mansfield Debating Society. This invitation was received before we despatched ours for the concert. Mr. Jones, B.A. (Mansfield), took the chair. Mr. J. H. Woods, B.A. (Manchester), moved "That in the opinion of this House patriotism is morally and politically preferable to cosmopolitanism." Mr. Lenwood, B.A. (Mansfield, Ex-president of Oxford Union), opposed. There also spoke Messrs. Bevan, Jones, Evans, Rees, Stewart (of Mansfield), and Messrs. Hall, Travers, and Richards (of Manchester). Our men did not turn up in full number owing to an epidemic of colds, but those of us who were present thoroughly appreciated the hearty welcome given to us.

Discussion.—The 28th meeting of this society was held on Friday, November 14th. Mr. Hall moved, in a blood-red speech, the colourless resolution: "That this House expresses sympathy with the aim of the Czar's Rescript, but thinks its immediate application would not make the peace of Europe more secure." The honourable opener's views were so severely criticised that Mr. Travers felt the necessity of introducing the following amendment: "That this House declines to accept the proposition that the best means to secure peace is to increase armaments, and affirms that the welfare of humanity demands that immediate steps be taken to bring about total disarmament." There also spoke Messrs. Pal, Andreae, Woods, Rev. J. E. Carpenter and Dr. Drummond. Many more showed their desire to make a warm debate still warmer, but the sound of the bell prevented. The amendment was lost by 5 to 2 and the motion by 4 to 3

The 219th meeting took place on December 2nd, when Mr. Hicks moved: "That in the opinion of this House the Unitarian Movement is doomed to practical stagnation." Of course the debate was stormy and serious, but fortunately the wit and humour of Mr. Buckland, who kept us in tears of laughter during the twelve minutes allowed to him, restored us to equanimity. Two amendments were ruled out of order. There also spoke Messrs. Hall, Pal, Travers, Richards, Andreae, Stewart, and Sarkar. The motion was lost by 4 to 2, most of the members being disinclined to vote. At both meetings we have had good attendances of visitors.

Martineau Club.—Mr. Arnold L. Ward (Balliol), the son of Mrs. Humphry Ward, is president this year, and Mr. Alfred Hall, secretary. The first meeting was held on Friday, October 28th, when Mr. Bipin Chandra Pal delivered an eloquent and vigorous paper on "The Religion of the Bhagavad-gita." Mr. Pal is an energetic and practised speaker. This we have learned from a short experience in the Debating Society. Woe to the man for whom he goes! We have no doubt that many congregations will hear him before he returns, and that all who hear will remember him. Mr. Sarkar, in a thoughtful speech, showed us that our Colonial Universities could produce peers to us. On Friday, November 25th, Mr. F. C. Conybeare, who has just published a remarkable bit of heresy in the *Key of Truth*, which we welcome, and whose name has gone the length and breadth of the land as the champion of Dreyfus in England, delivered an interesting and scholarly paper on the "History of Christmas." Space will not allow us to give a summary of the facts which were then revealed, but we have good hopes that Mr. Conybeare will publish

something on the subject. A very instructive talk was afterwards taken part in by Dr. Drummond, Rev. J. E. Carpenter, Rev. J. E. Odgers, Mr. Ward, and the lecturer. The Club was glad to hear of Mr. Conybeare's intention to become a member.

We have again had the pleasure of spending our Sunday afternoons at Mr. Carpenter's, and have been reading Wordsworth's Prelude. Next term we are going to tackle Browning.

The workers at the St. Ebbe's Institute have lighter hearts now than they have had in the past. They are beginning to see the fruits of their labours and no longer doubt the advisability of continuing the work. During the long vacation Mr. Woods had charge of the work. We have the same helpers as last year, and they are showing more than the old enthusiasm and perseverance. Owing to increase in our Sunday school we have had to put another room into use, and Miss M. Odgers and Mr. J. Islam Jones have become teachers. Mr. Andreae has started a club for working men on Saturday evenings, which we hope will have a successful struggle with some of the public houses of the district. The evening services have steadily increased. On the last two Sundays in term the room was crowded, forty being present on each occasion. Several of our students have taken the services during the term, among whom we may mention Mr. Pal, who preached with such earnestness that one old lady remarked she was certain he was "converted." Another proof of the way in which our theological differences can be overcome is the fact that Mr. Barwell of Mansfield preached for us on November 20th, and other Mansfield men have offered their services for next term. Mr. Barwell is a ready and earnest preacher and his service was beneficial to his hearers. Two new features have been introduced into the services by Miss E. Drummond. A choir has been organised from the Sunday school and solos have been sung at every service. A concert was held on Monday, November 21st, when about fifty were present.

Several matters of interest have had to be omitted, and others have received scant notice owing to the limits of our space, and the difficulty of crowding the sayings and doings of a term into one letter. Term is now over. Most of the students have returned to their homes, to be fed by their friends on mince pies, sponge cakes, and toffee, and to endure more splitting headaches than the work of the term has caused, while the oppressiveness of vacation essays has caused a few to remain in Oxford. The Greetings of the Season to all!

—ALFRED HALL.

Since Time is not a person we can overtake when he is past, let us honour him with mirth and attention while he is passing.—*Goethe.*

The great rule for moral conduct is, next to God, to respect Time!

Time is almost the only thing for which it is a virtue to be covetous.

What a Year Gives.

What does God give in a year of time
To the narrowest life and the poorest heart?
Pomp of dawns and glory of eves,
Noons with a splendor undreamed of art,
Nights of a calm magnificence,—
By side of which the days are dim,—
Spicy odours, sweet orchard blooms,
And the rhythmic beat of the sea's great hymn.

What does he give in a year of time?
The woodland's echoes of songs without words,
The oratorio of the waves,
The matins and vespers of countless birds,
Music of winds in the deep-voiced trees,
And lyric outbursts of angry storms,
The bee's soft alto, the pine-trees' bass,
The chorus of myriad insect forms.

What does he give in a year of time?
The ordered change of the rolling sphere,
The spring's sweet tumult, the summer's glow,
And the ruddy autumn's wealth of cheer,
The dazzling drift and the sheeted ice,
The clouds of jet and the lightning's glare,
The velvet softness of moss-green turf,
And the breath of violets everywhere.

What does he give in a year of time?
Nights with a glory of moonlit beams,
Nights where the stars are clustered thick,
Nights when the world is a world of dreams,
Morns with a trailing purple mist,
Morns when a red sun hangs above,
Dewy freshness on upland glades,
And the multitudinous voice of doves.

What does he give in a year of time?
The varied tints of the Feast of Flowers,
The snowy drift of the fruitful trees,
The crimson hue of the rose-hung bowers,
Purples of every royal shade,
And gold of the latest autumn days,
Pink like the sea-shell's inmost heart,
And blue of the distant mountain's haze.

Ah! great the gift of a year of time,
If we count but the things we can hear and see!
The outspread year to the poet-soul
Is a dream, a rapture, an ecstasy.
But greater than all is the priceless gift
Of a work we feel to be all our own,
And every gift of an added year
An opportunity ours alone.

Hattie Tyng Griswold.

Thou must pass from old to new,
From vain to real, from mistake to fact,
From what once seemed good to what now proves best:
How could man be progressive otherwise?

—*Browning.*

THE CHILDREN'S PAGE.

The Lord's Prayer.

This morning I want you to think with me of the prayer which Jesus Himself taught us to pray. It is one of His most sacred gifts to us, and, as long as souls pray from earth towards heaven, these words of Jesus will remain an angel of help for God's children.

All of us know the prayer by heart; many say it by rote, like the alphabet. Have you ever noticed that there is a kind of poetry in it? First come the three petitions that speak of God—His name, His kingdom, and His will. Then follow the three petitions that speak of man—hungry, sinful, and weak. You see that there is beautiful arrangement. And I want you specially to remember this poetical order of the Lord's Prayer, because, through forgetting it or through not knowing of it, a good many people miss one of its most beautiful ideas. The words "in earth as it is in heaven," are generally taken to apply only to "Thy will be done"; but when the poetical arrangement of the prayer is noted, it is readily seen that those words apply, as adverbs, to the whole of the three clauses that precede them. Let me repeat it:—

Our Father, which art in heaven:
Hallowed be Thy name,
Thy kingdom come,
Thy will be done,
In earth as it is in heaven.

Now you see that the last line refers to each of the three lines that go before it. God's Name *is* hallowed in heaven, His Kingdom *is* already come there, and His Will *is* done there.

Our Father, which art in heaven: He is everbody's Father! and, when we pray this prayer, the first thought that Jesus puts into our minds is that therefore all of us are brethren. We must love God because He is the holy, kind and wise Father; and we must love one another because we are all brothers and sisters, all His children. He watches over us, is glad when we do right and is sorry when we do ill.

Hallowed be Thy Name (in earth as it is in heaven): God is so good and great, that we should always speak reverently of Him; never lightly or carelessly. His Name should be safe from all irreverence, and in our thought of Him we should never ascribe to Him any but the highest and best that we can think. For in very truth God is better than the best that we can think.

Thy Kingdom come (in earth as it is in heaven): Jesus preached "the Gospel of the Kingdom," that is, He wanted to bring in a state of society in which all men should love God, do His will, and live in peace and love with one another. That kingdom can be set up only by our living as if we already belonged to it. It lies in good people, and spreads from heart to heart, from life to life, silently as the yeast spreads in the dough, silently as the seed grows into a tree. And all good people help it along.

Thy will be done (in earth as it is in heaven): God's will is what is right and just and good. There is no difficulty in learning what it is, from parents and teachers, from the Bible and from your own conscience. We all know that we ought to be honest and fair, truthful, kind, generous and forgiving; and that the opposites of these are opposed to God's will.

Give us this day our daily bread: We cannot make food however hard we try. It is all God's making, and God's gift. Not that we are to be idle: we lift our hands and say, "Our Father, give us bread," and He lays in our hands work by means of which we may get food. *Bread*, not three courses of dainty fare, but enough of the simple foods to live on. *Us*, not me, but all of us. We are all brethren, and some of *us* are very poor; more than a thousand millions of people want bread every day, and all are toiling for bread, some in one way and some in another. We, who daily enjoy the fruits of the toil of so many, should try to help all to get bread. Perhaps we may be so blessed of God as to be able to answer the prayer of some who are praying this prayer. And remember Who it was that said, "I was hungry and ye fed Me." Very few of us dare to say *no* to a poor man or woman begging for bread. An old beggar woman said to Dr. Johnson, "I am an old struggler, sir, please help me"; and he replied "I am an old struggler, too," and gave her food.

Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us; Trespasses are wrongs done. If some one has done you wrong, and then is sorry for having wronged you, and tries not to do it again, and does his best to make amends, you do your best to forgive him and to forget all about it, and so make a fresh start between him and you. If we, "being evil," are ready to forgive one another, how much more ready is God to forgive us our wrongs to Him when we are heartily sorry. Indeed He is always anxious to forgive; He delights in it; and when we pray Him to forgive us, He is glad—especially if we are trying to forgive anyone who has done harm to us and is sorry. But He cannot forgive the unforgiving, any more than sunshine can come through a window with the shutters tight closed.

Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: That is all one petition, for temptation and evil are joined. Life is full of temptations—to be untruthful, lazy, proud, unkind; and the evil, that is in us already, turns these temptations into evils. To the drunkard every public house is a temptation, to the thief every unfastened window is a temptation; but the better a man is the fewer real temptations there are for him. All of us have temptations from within and from without. Our Father wants us to grow stronger because of them, and that is the reason why He has permitted them.

For Thine is the Kingdom, the Power and the Glory for ever: God has all in His hands, and we also are in His hands for ever. Amen.

BERNARD SNELL